GIRLS of the BIBLE

HARVEY ALBERT SNYDER

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON

AUG 0 8 2022

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Allison Broadhead

GIRLS OF THE BIBLE

TOLD IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE

BY

REV. HARVEY ALBERT SNYDER

AND

ETHEL WENDELL TROUT

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY

PHILADELPHIA TORONTO

1929.

Copyright, 1929, by
THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY
Copyright, 1911, by W. E. Scull

All rights reserved

Girls of the Bible PRINTED IN THE U. S. A. M-1159

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Story of Rebekah	1
How Jacob Found His Wife	8
How Miriam Saved Her Brother Moses	14
Faithful Ruth and Her Good Fortune	22
A Great Queen Who Visited a Great King	31
The Wickedness of Queen Jezebel	36
A Little Captive Maid Helps Her Master	40
The Story of Good Queen Esther	45
Mary, the Mother of Jesus	60
The Raising of Jairus' Daughter	65
The Story of a Foreign Woman and Her Child	69
Two Sisters Who Loved Jesus	74
How Jesus Appeared First to a Woman After His Resurrection	81
A Good Woman Restored to Life	89
Lydia, the First Christian Convert in Europe	93
The Slave Girl Who Mocked the Apostles	98
Priscilla, Who Helped to Spread the Gospel in Greece	102

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

RUTH WOULD NOT LEAVE NAOMI ..... *Frontispiece*

PAGE

ELIEZER BOWED LOW BEFORE REBEKAH 5

JACOB ASKED LABAN IF HE MIGHT HAVE RACHEL FOR HIS WIFE 11

MIRIAM WATCHED THE PRINCESS AS SHE OPENED THE LITTLE ARK 19

BOAZ TOLD RUTH THAT SHE MIGHT GLEAN IN HIS FIELDS EVERY DAY 27

WICKED JEZEBEL'S LIFE CAME TO A SAD END 38

NAARAH TOLD HER MISTRESS ALL SHE KNEW ABOUT THE GREAT PROPHET 40

ESTHER WAS CROWNED QUEEN IN PLACE OF VASHTI ... 47

AN ANGEL APPEARED TO MARY AND TOLD HER THAT SHE WAS TO BE THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR 61

JESUS TOOK JAIRUS' DAUGHTER BY THE HAND 67

MARTHA COMPLAINED TO JESUS THAT MARY DID NOT HELP HER 75

MARY ANOINTED JESUS' HEAD WITH THE OIL 83

OPEN the door of your heart, my lass,
To the things that shall abide;
To the holy thoughts that lift your soul
Like the stars at eventide.
All of the fadeless flowers that bloom
In the realms of song and art
Are yours, if you'll only give them room.
Open the door of your heart.

—Edward Everett Hale

THE STORY OF REBEKAH

NEARLY four thousand years ago there lived in Mesopotamia in Asia, a girl named Rebekah. She was a grandniece of Abraham whom God had chosen to be the head of a great nation.

Asia was the country in which the human race began. It was in Asia that Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Noah and his family lived.

The people in those days did not live as they now do. The living was simpler, and that is the reason why the people were healthier and lived longer. They did not have so many fancy things to eat and wear.

It was in this far-away time and country that Rebekah lived. Her father's name was Bethuel, and she had but one brother whose name was Laban. Although Rebekah loved to romp about with her brother, she also helped to drive the sheep to new pastures and carried water for her mother and ground the grain for bread. Instead of having fine, white flour as we now have, the grain was crushed between stones by hand and then the coarse flour was made into

small, biscuit-like cakes. There were no wells in the city and no water works to carry the water into the houses. There was usually but one well outside the city gate and all the people would go to this well and carry water to their homes. It is said that Rebekah was a very beautiful child, healthy and strong, and obedient. She grew to be a kind and loving woman.

Abraham did not want his son, Isaac, to marry any of the women of Canaan, for they worshiped idols; he wanted him to marry someone from the country where they used to live. He remembered his relatives, especially Bethuel, who was still in the old homeland.

One day he called his chief servant, Eliezer, to him and asked him to go over into Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac.

In those days the parents often chose the wife or the husband for the children.

Eliezer did not think that a girl would leave her home and travel several hundred miles into a strange country and marry Isaac, but Abraham was sure that God would help him find a wife for Isaac, and he urged the man to go. It was also important that Isaac should have a good wife out of the Hebrew nation, for Jesus Christ was to descend from that race.

So Eliezer, Abraham's chief steward, who had charge of all his affairs, began to prepare for the long journey. He took ten of Abraham's camels and many beautiful presents, and with a company of men started out on the journey across the desert to the place where Abraham's relatives lived.

Camels are used in that country to ride upon, just as horses are used here. Camels are usually used in traveling across the deserts as they can go for many days without water.

A camel has two stomachs. In one of these are a large number of cells in which they store up water for use when on a long journey. Eliezer traveled several weeks, and one evening about dark he came to the city of Nahor where Abraham's relatives lived. He had stopped to rest his camels and had just made them kneel down by the well of water that was outside the city gate and from which the people of the city got all their water.

It was nearly evening, and many of the women of the city were coming out to draw water. He noticed one young woman especially, who was very graceful, and as she came near, he saw that she was beautiful. She came and filled her jug and was about to place it upon her shoulder when Eliezer bowed low and told her how he had

traveled far and had no pitcher with which to draw water. He asked if she would allow him to drink from her pitcher, and she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. When she had finished giving him drink, she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking." Then she went to the well and drew more water and emptied it into the trough until the ten camels all had had enough to drink.

We think it strange that Eliezer and his men allowed this young woman to do this work for them, but it was customary in those days.

Abraham's steward was pleased with the girl because of her kindness and beauty, and wondered if she was the one meant to be Isaac's wife. When the camels had finished drinking, he gave Rebekah a beautiful gold earring and two heavy gold bracelets.

Then he asked whose daughter she was, and whether there was room at her father's home for him and his men and camels to stay for the night. Rebekah told him that there was room for them, and food and straw for the camels. When the girl said that she was Bethuel's daughter, Eliezer knew that she was one of Abraham's relatives, for Abraham was Bethuel's uncle.

Rebekah ran home and told her mother what

had happened and showed her the earring and the bracelets. Then her brother Laban, seeing that they were well-to-do people, ran to the well and said, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why standest thou without? I have made ready

ELIEZER BOWED LOW BEFORE REBEKAH

the house for thy reception, and also prepared a place for thy camels."

Eliezer went home with Laban, and his camels were unharnessed and fed, and he and the men were given water with which to wash their feet.

They were given a supper, but Eliezer would not eat until he had told them why he had come to their country. He then told them that he was Abraham's chief steward and that Abraham had become a great and good man. The Lord had given him silver and gold and flocks and herds and many camels. He also had a son called Isaac. He told them that Abraham had given all his riches to his son Isaac, and now had sent into this country to find a wife for Isaac among his relatives.

Then Eliezer related how he had prayed to God, and how he had met Rebekah at the well and how he believed she was the one whom the Lord had showed him was to be Isaac's wife, in answer to his prayer.

The parents said that Rebekah might go and become Isaac's wife. This made Eliezer glad, and he brought out still more beautiful presents, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and beautiful cloth and gave them to Rebekah. Then he gave her mother and brother presents and they spent the evening in feasting and joy.

Early the next morning Abraham's servants arose and began to make preparations to return home to the land of Canaan. Rebekah's mother and brother did not want to part with her so soon and begged Eliezer to allow her to stay ten

days longer, for she was going to a far country and they might never see her again. But Eliezer said that the Lord had helped him in his task and they ought to return at once to Abraham and Isaac.

They called Rebekah and said, "Wilt thou go with this man?" and she answered, "I will go." So Rebekah and her nurse went away with Abraham's steward and his men on their camels to the land of Canaan.

They had traveled nearly two weeks and Rebekah had begun to wish she were home again, for she had never before been away from her mother.

One evening, Isaac was walking out in the fields when he looked up and saw the camels coming. As they came near, Rebekah saw Isaac in the field and asked the steward what man was coming to meet them. Eliezer said that it was his master, Isaac. Then Rebekah knew that the journey was ended and that he was to be her husband. She felt shy, and took her veil and covered her face and came down from the camel.

So Isaac and Rebekah met for the first time, and Isaac took her to his home and she became his wife and he loved her dearly.

HOW JACOB FOUND HIS WIFE

THE years passed quickly for Isaac and Rebekah. They had twin sons, Jacob and Esau, who were very unlike one another. Esau was his father's favorite; he was an out-of-door boy, fond of hunting and all sorts of sports. Jacob was more quiet and thoughtful; he was his mother's pet. The two boys were so very different that they often disagreed, and the family was not always happy.

At last the time came when the two boys were old enough to be married. Esau married first. As was the custom in those days he had more than one wife. He chose his wives from among the young women of the land of Canaan, where the family lived.

But Esau's wives did not please Isaac and Rebekah. They were a grief to the father and mother. They did not worship the true God; they worshiped idols, instead. So Isaac and Rebekah did not want Jacob to marry as Esau had done, among the young women of the land. Finally it was decided that Jacob should go back to the homeland of his mother, Rebekah, to find a wife among her people.

Far away, in the country of Haran, Rebekah's brother, Laban, was living as he had lived in the days before Rebekah was married. He had two daughters, whose names were Leah and Rachel. Leah, the elder, was not so attractive as Rachel, who was beautiful and graceful and kind-hearted. Every day Rachel went to the city well to get water for her father's flocks, as her Aunt Rebekah had done so long before, in the days before she had gone to Canaan to be married to Isaac.

One day as Jacob traveled along he came to a well in a field, with three flocks of sheep lying close by. There was a great stone over the mouth of the well, and the shepherds seemed to be waiting for something or someone. Jacob went up to them, and asked them where they came from.

"From the land of Haran," they answered.

Then Jacob knew that his journey was ended.

"Do you know Laban?" he next asked.

"Yes, we know him," they answered.

Then Jacob inquired about his uncle's family, and asked if it was well with them.

"It is well," the shepherds told him. "And, behold, Rachel, Laban's daughter, is coming with the sheep. We are waiting until she comes."

Just then Rachel drew near with her father's

flocks. Jacob thought how beautiful she was, as he watched her leading the sheep toward the group of men. He hurried to the well, and removed the stone from its mouth. He helped her to water the sheep. Then he told her that he was her cousin, and she ran back to her home with the news, while Jacob followed.

What rejoicing there was in Laban's household that night! They feasted together, and told one another all that had happened. It was a very happy meeting.

Time passed rapidly, and Jacob became a member of the household of Laban. He watched Rachel as she did her tasks each day. He loved her dearly. And so it came about that at the end of a month he asked Laban if he might have her for his wife. He said that he would serve his uncle seven years, if Laban would let him marry her.

"It is better that I should give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man," Laban said. "Abide with me, as thou sayest."

For seven years Jacob served his Uncle Laban. And he loved Rachel so much that the time seemed to him only a few days.

Then a dreadful thing happened! At the end of the time, Laban insisted that Jacob must marry the older sister, Leah, whom he did not

love, instead of Rachel, whom he loved! Laban said that it was the custom of the land for the older daughters to be married before their younger sisters were. If Jacob wanted to marry Rachel he must serve seven years longer.

JACOB ASKED LABAN IF HE MIGHT HAVE RACHEL FOR HIS WIFE

Poor Jacob! He knew that he must do as his uncle commanded. So he served Laban seven years more, in order that he might marry Rachel. Don't you think that she must have been a wonderful young woman, to have made him love her so well?

Years passed by. Jacob and Rachel had one little son, whom they named Joseph. They loved him dearly.

But Jacob and Laban were not always good friends now, and Jacob at last decided that he wanted to take his family and return to his own land. He gathered his possessions together, for by this time he had become a rich man, and started forth with a great company of servants and cattle and sheep and camels.

Slowly the party moved along toward Canaan. At last they were almost there. Then one day Jacob saw a party of riders coming near. Were they friends or enemies? He did not know at first, so he arranged his servants that they might fight if it was necessary. He put Rachel and little Joseph in the rear of the line, which was the safest place, if this should chance to be an enemy who would attack them.

But the approaching party was headed by Jacob's brother, Esau. And Esau ran to meet Jacob, and embraced him. Jacob introduced him to Leah and to Rachel, and they all became friends.

Jacob returned to the land of his birth. He found that his mother was dead, but his father, Isaac, was still alive, and greeted him joyfully.

A sad thing happened as they came to the end of their journey. Rachel died, near the little town of Bethlehem, where, hundreds of years later, her descendant, Jesus Christ, was born. There she was buried, and Jacob, in his grief, set up a pillar over her grave.

To this day there is a building over the spot which is called "The Tomb of Rachel"—Rachel, for whom Jacob served seven years, and yet another seven years, because he loved her so much.

HOW MIRIAM SAVED HER BROTHER MOSES

MOSES is often called the first lawgiver. He wrote the first five books of the Bible, and they contain the law of God to man. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, and Moses gave them to the people.

Moses was a great man, but this great man nearly lost his life when he was a small baby.

He was born in a little hut near the banks of the river Nile, in Egypt. The Pharaoh, or king, was a very wicked man, selfish and cruel. He was the father, or perhaps the grandfather, of the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea.

In this part of Egypt there were a great many Hebrew people. They were known for their wisdom and skill. This cruel king did not like to see so many bright Hebrew boys growing up. He was afraid that in time they would become too many and too strong for him and drive him from his throne because of his wickedness. He treated them as slaves, and had hard masters drive the men and boys to work in the brickyards and stone quarries to build those great walls and temples in Egypt. But the more he

oppressed them, the more they increased in numbers, and the cities were full of boys and girls playing in the streets. Then the king ordered the nurses to kill all the little boys as soon as they should be born, and allow only the girl babies to live. This terrible order of the king brought sorrow and gloom to the hearts of the poor Hebrew mothers. The little boy babies could not be taken out of doors for fear some Egyptian would see them or hear them and try to kill them.

At this time there lived in this country a good man and wife named Amram and Jochebed. This mother had three children; a little girl ten or twelve years old, a little boy three years old, and a little baby boy. For three months the mother hid this baby in some corner of the house so that no Egyptian would know he was there. There was great danger, for they lived only a little way from the river Nile, and near the home of one of the king's daughters. The mother knew that she could not keep the child hidden much longer. He was strong, and wanted to use his voice and feet. Someone might hear him cry and then the king would hear about it and a soldier would be sent to kill the little boy. So the mother began to think of some way to save the child. She believed in God and that God

would help her. She thought of a plan and then carried it out at once.

On the banks of the river Nile there grew a plant called papyrus. It was a kind of rush, which was often woven into baskets. Jochebed gathered some of these rushes and wove them into a boat basket, and then daubed it over with pitch so as to keep the water out. This was all done secretly. After several days the pitch dried and the little boat was ready for use.

The next morning the family rose earlier than usual. Their hearts were sad, for on this day they were to hide their dear baby by the river, and trust to God to save him in some way. They went to the river, going along a side path to the water. The mother wrapped the baby in a warm blanket and, as the father held the little basket, she laid him nicely into it, with one long good-by kiss and a sob of grief. The cover was then laid on and the little ark tied to some small stout rushes so that it could not wash away. There the little babe slept in his little ark and knew nothing that had happened. He was resting under the protection of God, so that no fierce animal of the land or of the river could come near to hurt him.

Even though the mother trusted her baby to the care of the Lord, she felt that she must look

after him a little. It would not do for her to remain near and watch, for if the baby should be found, the finder would at once know to whom it belonged, and it would be killed as a Hebrew. But Miriam, the sister, an uncommonly bright child and quick-witted, stood afar off with her eyes fixed on the basket down among the rushes.

The minutes went slowly by and nobody came along that bypath near the rushes. As Miriam stood there hiding behind some bush so as not to be noticed, with her heart full of sorrow for her little brother, she noticed a stir not far away. The king's daughter had come with her maids to take her usual morning bath in the sacred river.

As the king's daughter was bathing, several of her maids walked along the river bank. As they came near to the basket, can you not imagine Miriam's heart beginning to beat faster? How anxious she must have been as she watched from her hiding place!

The maid who remained nearest to the princess first saw the curious basket. Then the princess also saw it, and she sent the maid to bring it to her. When the princess opened the little ark, she saw the little child and it began to cry. Her kind heart was touched by the pitiful cry and she had pity on the little babe whom she knew had

been placed there to avoid being killed by her cruel father's order.

How Miriam's heart must have beat when she saw them looking at her little brother and knew that he was now safe, for Pharaoh would not take him away from his own daughter! Miriam was so anxious to know what would become of her little brother that she could hide no longer. She came out from her hiding place and walked slowly down the path as unconcernedly as possible, to the place where the princess and her maids were.

Miriam knew that the princess could not well take care of the baby and that he must have a nurse. When she heard the princess speaking kindly about the child and saw that she had pity for it, she drew nearer to the little company all huddled around the basket, and said very modestly, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

This was a rather bold thing for the little girl to do, but she wanted to have her little brother's life spared, and she had the courage to do almost anything.

The king's daughter looked into her honest, bright eyes for a moment and then said kindly, "Go." The girl went and told her mother what

she had done, and the mother came to the place. Not knowing that this was the mother of the child, the princess said, "Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

MIRIAM WATCHED THE PRINCESS AS SHE OPENED THE LITTLE ARK

The mother, with her little boy again in her arms, hastened home and told the family how God had heard their prayers and saved the child.

In this way the baby became the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and the king spared him for her sake. He was now a member of the

royal family and looked upon as a young prince who might some day sit upon the throne. The princess often came to see the child, and she named him Moses, which means "to draw out" in Hebrew. "Because," said she, "I drew him out of the water."

As soon as Moses was old enough, the princess took him to her home and he was one of the royal family. They hired private teachers for him and he was taught in all the learning of the people, and was mighty in words and deeds. Kings and princes and the great and wise men of the world were his associates and teachers. He became very wise and lived in the family of the king. He was made commander of the army and had influence, but he did not forget the God of his fathers who spared his life when a child. His mother had taught him about God and he never forgot her teaching. When he became a man, he gave up all the riches and pleasures and honors of the court and palace that he might go and share the sorrows of his own people, the Children of Israel.

When he saw his own people suffering, and saw how they were being oppressed and destroyed, he could not enjoy the splendor and wealth of the palace. He wanted to go and help them to freedom.

Moses lived a long and useful life. He led his people to freedom and died when he was one hundred twenty years old.

We learn from the life of Moses that God protects us from many dangers. He guides our lives in right ways if we trust him, and he will make us a great blessing in the world.

FAITHFUL RUTH AND HER GOOD FORTUNE

MANY years ago there lived in the land of Moab a little girl named Ruth. She was a kind and loving child, dearly loved by her parents and all who knew her.

The land of Moab in which Ruth lived was a small country on the east side of the Dead Sea. Only a small part of the land could be cultivated, for it was broken by many small streams and rough hills. Only occasionally a tree could be seen on the plains.

It was a beautiful country. The hills were covered with the most beautiful wild flowers, and the boys and girls could gather more beautiful wild flowers than we can gather in our gardens.

The cities of Moab all had walls built around them to keep out any enemy that might enter the country. The people were called Moabites. They were a heathen people and worshiped idols. They did many strange and cruel things because they thought that these things pleased their gods.

Ruth was never taught about God by her parents. All she knew about a God was that

she saw her people praying to these strange-looking images made of stone and wood. It was a cold and cruel kind of religion to her. She often feared that she might be tortured to please some of these strange gods, and the superstition of her people made her afraid.

When Ruth grew to be a girl in her teens, her parents began to look for a husband for her. Girls married very young in those days, often when they were not more than twelve or fourteen years old. As Ruth was kind-hearted and a friend to everybody, she was loved by all who knew her, and it was not an easy matter to decide whom she should marry.

At this time there lived on the other side of the Dead Sea in the small town of Canaan, a man named Elimelech with his wife Naomi, and two children, Mahlon and Chilion.

There was a famine in Canaan and many of the people were starving. Elimelech and his family suffered so much that they decided to move over into Moab where there was plenty of food.

They had not been in their new home long before they became acquainted with Ruth and her parents. Ruth was undoubtedly a frequent visitor to their home and enjoyed hearing Naomi tell about her own people across the sea and the

God of love whom they served. This seemed so strange and different to what she had been taught, that it appealed to her nature and she loved and served the true God of Israel.

But something more happened. One of Naomi's sons fell in love with Ruth. Even though the Israelites had been forbidden to marry any of these people, Ruth and Mahlon were married, and Ruth came to Naomi's home to live.

The other son, Chilion, married a girl named Orpah. They all lived at home as was customary in those days.

It was a happy family. Ruth seemed to be the happiest of all and dearly loved her mother-in-law, but it was not long before sorrow came into that happy home. Elimelech took sick and died. Then in a short time the two sons, Ruth's husband and Orpah's husband, also died. The happy home became a sad home. Naomi was left alone with her two daughters-in-law and they did not know what to do in their great sorrow.

They had lived in this land ten years, and now Naomi became homesick. She wanted to return to her old home and people. She heard that the famine was over, and she decided to return to Bethlehem at once.

Then she asked Ruth and Orpah if they would not rather remain in Moab, their own land, and among their own relations and friends. They both loved Naomi and did not want to leave her alone and they wept when she spoke of parting with them. But Orpah kissed Naomi and bade her good-by and went to her own home. Ruth, however, would not leave her, but said, "Where thou goest, I will go, and where thou livest, I will live, thy friends shall be my friends, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried." Then Ruth asked the Lord to punish her if she ever left Naomi as long as they both should live. When Naomi saw how much Ruth loved her and wanted to go with her, she was glad and they started on their long journey.

If Ruth had remained in Moab, the world would never have heard of her. Now everybody knows Ruth and loves her, and one of the books of the Bible is named after her. She became the great-grandmother of King David, and Jesus the Saviour was a descendant of Ruth.

This all came to her because she chose to follow the true God rather than bow down to idols. Because she loved God, he led her and gave her a wonderful womanly life.

Sadly they left their home in Moab to go home to Bethlehem. Many days were spent in

crossing the hills and green valleys of Moab. The country looked beautiful, but their hearts were sad.

At length they arrived at Bethlehem. They were tired and weak from the long journey. The people at Bethlehem were rejoicing and having a great festival because of the large crops that were just being harvested. When they saw Naomi, they remembered her, but hardly knew her, for she had changed so much. She looked sad and lonely. They asked each other, "Is that Naomi, who went away so happy ten years ago?" How many sad changes had come to her life! And she said, "Call me not Naomi, which means 'pleasant,' but call me Mara, 'bitter,' for the Lord has sent me great trouble, and dealt very bitterly with me."

Now that they were in Bethlehem, something had to be done for a living. Ruth was ready and willing to work. It was time to cut the barley, and the poor were accustomed to go to the fields of the rich and follow the reapers and gather up the heads of grain that were dropped. There was also a rule to let some grain fall occasionally, which the poor might take. In this way the poor would be well cared for and the people would not be taxed to keep them.

Ruth started out one morning and went to

the field of a rich man whose name was Boaz. It happened that Boaz was a relative of Naomi's husband and was the richest man in Bethlehem, though Ruth did not know this.

BOAZ TOLD RUTH THAT SHE MIGHT GLEAN IN HIS FIELDS EVERY DAY

He was also a good man. When he came to the fields in the morning, instead of saying, "Good morning," as we do, he said to his men, "The Lord be with you," and they answered, "The Lord bless thee."

In looking over his field, Boaz caught sight of

Ruth, who was beautiful and dignified. She was different from most gleaners and Boaz asked his chief servant who the young woman was. The servant answered that she was a young woman from Moab who had come home with Naomi.

Boaz spoke kindly to Ruth and said that she might glean in his fields every day, and that when she became thirsty she might go to the pitchers of water and drink what she wanted. Ruth bowed down to Boaz and asked why he was so kind to her. Boaz answered that he had been told of her kindness to her mother-in-law, and how she had left her father and mother and her own land of Moab, and had come to live among the Children of Israel. Then he asked God to reward her for coming and serving the Lord instead of the idols. Boaz also asked her to come at mealtimes and eat and drink with his laborers. Ruth did so and he waited upon her that she might have enough to eat.

In the evening when Ruth returned home, Naomi was surprised that she had gathered so much barley, and asked her in what field she had been gleaning. Ruth answered that it was in the field of Boaz, and that he had asked her to come every day. Naomi then told her that Boaz was a relative of her husband.

That night Boaz was to thresh some barley on his threshing floor. This was done by beating the barley until it come out of the heads. Then they gathered up the straw, and the grain would lie on the floor. Ruth was undecided whether or not to go to the threshing floor, but Naomi asked her to go and tell Boaz that they were related, and ask him to be kind to them. Ruth dressed nicely and went to Boaz. When she came home, he gave her six measures of barley and she and Naomi were happy. They now knew that Boaz loved Ruth.

In those days the cities had walls built around them, with gates for the people to go in and out. The market places where the people bought and sold were often at these gates. The rulers came to these gates to hold court and try any guilty person, and to see what punishment he should have. If a man wished to tell the people of the town anything, he came to the gates, for there were always a great many people around.

The day after Ruth had visited Boaz at the threshing floor, he went down to the gates and sat down and called the elders, or chief men, of the town to him and told them that he was going to marry Ruth, the beautiful girl who had come home with Naomi. He said to the elders and to the people, "Ye are the witnesses," and the

elders and the people answered, "We are the witnesses."

Then they prayed that the Lord would bless Boaz and Ruth, that they might be happy and prosperous.

Then Boaz took Ruth for his wife and they lived very happily.

A GREAT QUEEN WHO VISITED A GREAT KING

"SOME day, Balkis, you will be the queen of all this land. It is well for you to study and to learn, so that you may be able to rule wisely and well. That is your duty to your people and to yourself."

It was about three thousand years ago, in the country of Sheba, in southern Arabia, but the little girl nodded her head, as she listened to her father's words, just as you might have done. Sometimes it made her almost afraid, when she thought of all the power that lay in her hands. When she expressed the slightest wish, her slaves hurried to fulfil it. She had only to raise her little finger, and they hastened to obey. She *must* try to learn, so that she might be able to rule in the very best way. So she studied her lessons hard; she listened to all the teachings of the wise men who came to her father's court. As she grew up, she herself became noted for her wisdom and good judgment. And so, when the time came for her to become the Queen of Sheba, she was a wise and fair ruler of her people, trying to be careful and just in all her dealings with them.

Then one day there came to her court the news of a great king, of whom she had never heard before.

"Far off in Palestine," it was said, "there is a great king named Solomon. He is the very wisest man in all the world, and the very richest. He knows everything, and he has everything that the heart could desire. His palace is built of beautiful cedar wood and marble. It is covered with gold and precious stones. His throne is made of ivory, overlaid with gold. The Temple of his God is magnificent. His navy sails far and wide, to bring him treasures from all parts of the world. But, greatest of all," the report ended, "is the wisdom which God has given to him."

At first the Queen of Sheba paid little attention to the tales which she heard. But again and again they came to her. At last she decided that she would go to see Solomon, and find out for herself about his wisdom and his richness and his greatness.

She called together her counselors. She made arrangements to be away for a long time, for the land of Arabia is far from the land of Palestine, where King Solomon reigned. In those days there were no trains or automobiles, and the journey had to be made by means of camels.

And, though the great animals traveled swiftly, the trip would take many days.

"Bring together rich spices and gold from my stores," the queen commanded. "Bring precious jewels from my treasure chests."

Obediently her attendants carried out her orders. Myrrh and cinnamon and cassia, from which fragrant incense was made, were brought; great quantities of gold were put in strong boxes, and precious rubies and diamonds were packed in safe chests. Then the servants placed the boxes and the chests on the backs of the camels. The queen climbed to her seat on the back of the best and swiftest camel, and off they started on their journey.

On and on they traveled. In the daytime, when the sun was hot, they rested in their tents. Then, as the sun sank, they went on again. At last they saw Mount Hermon in the distance, and knew that they were nearly at the end of the journey. Southward still they rode, on and on, through the land where King Solomon reigned. How prosperous the people seemed, and how satisfied! Everywhere there was happiness. The queen wondered at the contentment of the men and women whom she saw.

At last they came to the city of Jerusalem, which King Solomon's father, King David, had

built. As they drew near, they could see the great golden dome of the white marble Temple shining in the sunlight. The whole great city soon lay stretched before them.

When King Solomon heard that the Queen of Sheba had come to the city, he received her graciously. She talked with him of many things that she had long had in her heart and in her mind. She tested his wisdom with all sorts of hard questions and hard problems. But always he could answer her wisely. Not once was there a problem that he could not solve; not once did he fail.

Then he took her through the vast rooms of his palace—the throne room, with the ivory and gold lion throne, of which she had heard, the porches with their cedar columns, and the great court. He also showed her the great Temple which he had built for God, with its great courts, and the altars where hundreds of priests daily offered sacrifice, and led the people in their worship. He made a feast in her honor, and his servants waited on her royally.

Even the Queen of Sheba was amazed at Solomon's glory. She had never before listened to such a wise man; she had never before seen such riches. She had not even imagined them.

And so it came about that she said to the

king, "It is a true report that I have heard in my own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom, O King Solomon. I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes. But, in truth, the half was not told me."

Then she gave thanks to God, who had put such a wise and just king upon the throne of Israel. She gave to Solomon the gifts of jewels and gold and spices which she had brought for him, and he, in return, gave gifts to her.

Then the Queen of Sheba went back to her own land, marveling at the wisdom and riches of King Solomon, and blessing God for what he had done.

And the report of King Solomon's wisdom spread farther than ever, through the Queen of Sheba, who had seen in his own city the king to whom God had granted wisdom and riches and honor greater than to any king who ever lived, before that time, or since.

THE WICKEDNESS OF QUEEN JEZEBEL

WE are to read about Jezebel, not that girls may pattern after her, but that she may be a warning.

Jezebel grew to be a very wicked woman. She was once a sweet, loving, little baby. How her mother watched every move to be sure she was not sick! Day after day as she cared for the little one she wondered about her little girl. Would she grow to womanhood and be a blessing to the world and an honor to her parents, or would she become sinful and be a disgrace? How anxious every mother is about her child!

Jezebel's father was the king of Tyre and Sidon. He was also a priest, but not of the true God whom we love and serve. He served a wicked heathen god. There was no love or mercy in his god. He was a brutal god and enjoyed wicked deeds.

This was not a very good beginning for a child. She was born in wickedness. They called her Jezebel. It was a beautiful name and means purity. But she disgraced the name, and no one thinks of calling a little girl Jezebel now.

Jezebel not only had wicked parents, but they

let her do as she pleased. They were rich and had many servants, and Jezebel was a spoiled child. She was very beautiful and the people told her this, and she became proud and selfish. She was never taught to control her temper, and often became violently angry. She would be saucy to her nurse and strike her mother. She became a very cruel little girl. She made fun of everyone who did not dress so well as she did. How sad it is for such a beautiful child to be allowed to grow up as she did!

When Jezebel was still very young, she married Ahab, who soon became king of Israel. Ahab believed in the true God and offered sacrifices to God, but he soon became a very wicked man. His young wife had great influence over him and she used him to bring about her wicked ends. He came to be the most wicked king Israel ever had. One of the things he did was to build a temple in the city of Samaria, in which wicked men offered up sacrifices to the heathen gods of Jezebel.

Jezebel hated all of God's prophets and tried to have them put to death. She threatened to kill God's good prophet Elijah, and he went to hide in the wilderness for a long time, and the ravens brought food to him.

To show the wickedness of her heart let us read what she did at another time.

Ahab wanted a vineyard that belonged to a man named Naboth. Naboth did not wish to sell at any price, so Jezebel said she would get the vineyard for Ahab. Then she wrote letters and signed them with Ahab's name, and sealed

WICKED JEZEBEL'S LIFE CAME TO A SAD END

them with his seal, and sent them to the elders of the city of Jezreel, where Naboth lived. In these letters she ordered them to find some wicked men who would tell lies about Naboth, and say that they heard him speak evil of God and of the king.

It was the law that if any person should speak evil of God or of the king he should be stoned to death. The elders did as Jezebel commanded, and found two men who would lie against Naboth. Then he was arrested and taken out of the city and stoned with stones until he died. They sent word to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth is stoned and is dead." Then the wicked Jezebel called her husband, Ahab, and told him to go and take the vineyard of Naboth, for he was dead, and Ahab took it for his own.

God then sent his prophet Elijah to tell Ahab that he and his wicked wife and all their family would be destroyed by God, because of their wickedness. In a few years it came to pass as God had said. Jezebel was thrown out of a window and her body trampled by horses and eaten by dogs.

How sad that such a beautiful and talented child and woman should live such a life and come to such an end! How much good she might have accomplished!

A LITTLE CAPTIVE MAID HELPS HER MASTER

IN one of the small villages among the hills in the north of Palestine lived a little maid. We do not know her name.

The old Hebrews called her Naarah Kêtanah, which means "a little captive maid." We shall call her Naarah.

Naarah's home was a small house with none of the pretty things that we have in our houses. She must have had a good father and mother or she would not have been the good girl she was.

In those days the children would help the mother spin yarn out of which to make cloth for clothing, or go with the father out into the hills to help watch the sheep.

Occasionally one of the prophets would come to town and Naarah probably went to the meetings and heard about God.

She was not allowed to go far from home because a war had broken out between her people, who were Israelites, and the Syrians on the north. Any day an army of soldiers might make a raid on the village and carry away many things and kill some of the people. One day the alarm was given that some Syrian soldiers were

coming over the hills, and it caused much excitement. In a short time they were in the village taking everything they could capture. Little Naarah was caught and carried away. The soldiers wanted to take her to Syria and sell her as a slave.

We do not know how long Naarah had to travel with those cruel soldiers. There were probably other men and women and children captured and they were all taken together through the thick woods of the Jordan valley, and up the rough country across the Jordan river. Then they were taken up and down the rugged hills until they came to the high mountains of Hermon with their cold winds and snow, then down again into the broad and level country about Damascus.

At last they reached the great city of Damascus where the general of the great Syrian army lived. His name was Naaman. The captives were brought before Naaman that he might select some slaves for his own household. Naarah was chosen to be the maid to wait upon the great general's wife.

Although Naarah lived in a grand mansion with fine furnishings and everything pleasant, she was homesick and often cried herself to sleep in her loneliness.

It is not a fine house that makes a home, but those around us whom we love. Naarah longed for her two-roomed house and her father and mother and brothers and sisters, all happy together. Every night she prayed that God would keep them and help her be a good woman.

Naaman was a great general, next in rank to the king, and he was highly honored by the king, but he was unhappy, for he had a terrible disease called leprosy. In this disease the skin turns white as snow, the hair falls from the head, the nails drop from the fingers, and sores cover the body. The doctors could not cure the disease. So Naaman with all his money and pleasant surroundings was sad and unhappy, for the time would soon come when he would be so weak that he would have to resign. Then the people would know that he was a leper and would shun him.

Naaman and his wife were very kind to little Naarah and she often wished that he could be cured, for his illness made Naaman's wife very nervous and sad.

Naarah remembered how the good prophet Elisha had cured many at her home, and she believed that if the great general would go to the prophet Elisha he could be cured. One day, when waiting on her mistress, she said, "Would that

my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would cure him of his leprosy." She spoke so earnestly that the general's wife asked her many questions about the prophet, and the little maid told her all she knew about him.

As soon as Naaman was told what the little maid had said, he went to the king. The king heard about the prophet and was anxious that something be done, so he sent Naaman with a letter of introduction to the king of Israel and a rich present to the prophet.

Naaman, with his horses and chariot and servants started for the home of the prophet down in Israel. He came and stood at the door of Elisha's house and sent Elisha word that they had come. Elisha did not come out to them but sent out a messenger saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be made well."

This made Naaman angry. He had never been treated with so little respect. He was the great general of the army of Syria and expected people to come to him.

In his anger he said, "I thought he would surely come out to me, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and heal me. Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters

of Israel? May I not wash in them and be healed?" And he went away in a rage.

This disappointed his servants, for they hoped to see their master cured of this terrible disease. One servant came to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather obey him, when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean." Then Naaman went down into the river and dipped himself seven times, and the disease was cured.

He and his servants returned to Elisha's house, full of joy and said, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but the God of Israel." Then they offered Elisha presents, but he would not accept them. Naaman then returned to his home in Syria.

Naaman became a different man. He was cured and happy, and little Naarah was glad. She saw that her master now loved her God. He prayed as she prayed. Little Naarah was the cause of it all. How happy she must have been to think that this great general now believed in God! Naaman and his wife must have been very kind to Naarah for what she did.

Even a little girl can do great good to others and help cure the dread disease of sin by telling about Jesus.

THE STORY OF GOOD QUEEN ESTHER

ESTHER was one of the most beautiful women that ever lived. When she was a small child, her parents died and she was adopted by her cousin Mordecai, who was a good man and very kind to Esther. He taught her to believe in God, and often told her about her people, the Jews, and how they had been defeated by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar and carried away into captivity.

Mordecai and Esther lived in Shushan, a great city in Persia, where the winter palace of Ahasuerus, the king, was located.

The palace buildings were beautiful, being built of fine stone and marble. In their interior were great curtains of white and green and blue, fastened by cords and silver rings to pillars of marble. The beds in the palace were made of silver and gold, and the floors were of red and blue and white and black marble. When a feast was given, the guests drank out of golden cups.

Around the palace were beautiful gardens, trees, fountains, and flowers.

In the third year of his rule, the king made a great feast for all the nobles and governors of Persia. This feast lasted one hundred eighty days.

Then he made another feast for all the people in his palace. This lasted only seven days.

At the same time Vashti, the queen, made a feast in the queen's part of the palace for all the women.

On the seventh day of the king's feast, after he had drunk much wine, he sent for Vashti to come before him with the crown upon her head, that the people might see how beautiful she was.

In Persia women never showed themselves before men unless they wore veils, and the queen refused to come without the veil over her face. This made the king angry. At the close of the entertainment, he asked his counselors what he should do to the queen, who had refused to obey his orders. The counselors were afraid that the disobedience of the queen, if left unpunished, would cause all the women of Persia to have a good excuse not to obey their husbands, so they ordered the king to send her away and get another wife.

This pleased the proud king, and he sent letters throughout all the provinces of his kingdom commanding that every man should be

ruler in his own house. Then the king sent officers to all the provinces of his kingdom to bring all the beautiful young women of Persia to the palace so that the king might choose from among them his new queen to take the place of Vashti.

ESTHER WAS CROWNED QUEEN IN PLACE OF VASHTI

Esther, who had been adopted by her cousin Mordecai when a little girl, had now grown to be a beautiful young woman, and was forced to come to the palace of the king with many other young women, and placed in the care of the king's officer who had charge of the women. This

officer's name was Hegai. He was pleased with Esther and showed her special favors. He gave her a present, and appointed seven maidens to wait on her.

At last all the beautiful young women were brought before the king and the choice was made. He said, "This beautiful Esther, who seems to have dropped from the clouds, shall be my queen in the place of Vashti, and once more mirth and feasting shall enliven these gloomy halls."

A great feast was made to celebrate the wedding. It was called Esther's feast, and the king gave presents to all his servants for her sake.

Mordecai had told Esther to tell no one that she was a Jewess, and not even the king knew that he had married a Jewish girl.

Not long after this time, two of the king's officers became angry and made plans to assassinate their king. Mordecai, who was a watchman at the palace, overheard their plans and told Esther, and she told the king. The men were arrested and found guilty and both were hanged on a gallows.

One of the king's officers was named Haman. Soon after these events, the king promoted Haman to a position second to himself. After this all the king's servants bowed to Haman as he

passed. This made Haman very proud, and he expected the people to honor him, but Mordecai would not bow down to him. He did not think it was right; besides he knew that Haman hated God and the Jewish people.

When Haman found that Mordecai would not recognize him, he became very angry and determined to punish him. He also asked the king to have all the Jews in the kingdom destroyed. He said that if the king should give the order he would pay ten thousand talents of his own money into the king's treasury. This pleased the king, and he handed Haman his signet ring, which gave him power to put the order into force. This ring was often used to seal a new law which was to be enforced, instead of signing the king's name to it. In giving Haman the ring, the king meant that Haman could make such a law as he desired and put the seal upon it. Ahasuerus told Haman that he need not pay the ten thousand talents into the treasury, but that he might do with the Jews as he pleased.

Haman at once called all the king's writers together, and they wrote a decree, that upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the people of Persia should kill and destroy all the Jews in the kingdom, both young and old, little

children and women. He gave the people who killed them the right to take their houses, their lands, and their money, and to keep them for their own. Haman sealed the decree with the king's ring and had messengers take copies to all the rulers of all the provinces, so that all the people of Persia would know about it.

When Mordecai, who was the queen's cousin, and a Jew, heard of the decree, he was filled with great sorrow. Throughout the entire kingdom the Jews wept and fasted and prayed.

In time of great sorrow the Jews took off their usual clothing and dressed themselves in coarse sackcloth and sprinkled ashes on their heads.

Mordecai, in sackcloth and ashes, went up and down the streets crying bitterly. He stood before the gate of the king's palace and cried, but could not enter, for no person dressed in sackcloth was allowed to pass through the king's gate.

Queen Esther had not heard of the wicked decree of Haman, but her maids told her that Mordecai was dressed in sackcloth and crying in the streets. Esther was sorry and sent him some new clothing and told him to come to her that she might know his trouble. But he would not come.

Then she sent one of her favorite officers named Hatach to go to him and find out the cause of

his great trouble. Hatach questioned Mordecai, and Mordecai told all that had happened, and how Haman had planned to get the king's consent to destroy the Jews. Then he gave the officer a copy of the decree to show to Esther, and asked that she go to the king and implore him to save her people.

The officer told the queen what Mordecai had said, but Esther sent back word that whoever should go in before the king without being called must be put to death unless the king should hold out his golden scepter, and that she had not been called to come unto the king for thirty days, and feared to go.

The officer told Mordecai what the queen had said, but Mordecai sent word to Esther, that she, being a Jewess, would also be killed, even if she were the king's own wife, for the law included every Jew, even to the king's household. He also told her that God might have made her to be queen for the very purpose of saving her people at this time.

Then Esther sent word to Mordecai to gather together all the Jews of the city and fast for her, neither eating nor drinking for three days, and she and her maids would also fast and pray to God to have mercy upon her and to incline the king's heart toward her. This was done, and

on the third day Esther dressed in her royal robes and went before the king.

Ahasuerus, the king, was seated on a throne of ivory, glittering with ornaments of gold, while his high court officials stood about him.

The king noticed a movement at the entrance of the hall and, looking up, saw his beautiful queen standing before him. His heart was touched and he held up his golden scepter to her. She came forward trembling before him and, bowing down, touched the top of the scepter. The king asked Esther what she wanted and promised to give it to her even to the half of his kingdom.

Esther was not ready to tell the king what she wanted, but promised to do so the following day, if the king and Haman would come to a banquet she had prepared for them.

The king agreed to this and Haman felt more haughty than ever, to think that the queen had honored him.

The following day they were seated at the table in the elegant dining hall of the queen, with charming music all about them. Everybody was happy but Queen Esther. The king turned to her and asked, "What is thy petition, my fair queen, and what is now thy request? It shall surely be granted thee, even to the half of my kingdom."

But Esther was still not ready to tell the king the sad news, and she asked that he and his favorite come again the following day and she would make known her wish. So the king and Haman went away.

Haman hurried home with joy and pride to tell his wife and friends that he had been to the queen's banquet and was invited to attend a second one tomorrow. But as he went out and passed Mordecai at the king's gate and saw that he did not bow to him nor do him reverence, he was filled with anger and it spoiled his satisfaction.

At home his wife and friends came to him and he told them of his riches and his greatness, and that he had gone with the king to the queen's banquet and tomorrow he was invited to attend a second one. Still, he said, these things did not make him happy when he saw Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate and not bowing down to him as he passed.

Then his wife and friends, instead of encouraging him to be more unselfish, only helped his wicked heart to become more wicked by suggesting that a gallows fifty cubits high be built and that tomorrow he should ask the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. After that he could go to the queen's banquet and be happy.

This pleased Haman and he caused the gallows to be built and waited for a favorable time to ask the king.

That night the king could not sleep, and, wishing to improve the time, he had his servants bring the book in which were written all the important events of the kingdom. As the record of different events was read, they came to the place where Mordecai had saved the king's life by telling of the two officers who had planned to kill him. The king asked his servants what reward had been given Mordecai, and they answered that nothing had been done for him.

It was now early in the morning and the king heard someone coming into the outer court. Surprised that anyone should come to see him so early, he asked his servants who it was, and they replied that it was Haman who had come to see the king on important business. Haman was brought in and the king, still thinking of how Mordecai had saved his life, asked Haman, "What shall be done to the man whom the king desires greatly to honor?" Haman knew he was the king's favorite. So he thought in his mind, "The king means me," and he suggested that the royal robes of the king be put upon such a one, and the king's horse be brought out for his use, and that one of the most noble princes

should go before him through the city crying out, "Thus it shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

You can imagine how surprised Haman must have been, and how filled with shame and anger, when the king ordered him to make haste and take the robes and the horse and the crown and do to Mordecai, the Jew, as he had said, leaving nothing that he had spoken undone. Haman dared not disobey the order of the king, so had to do as he had said, and lead Mordecai through the streets. After it was all over, Mordecai came and sat down again, as humble as ever, at the king's gate. Haman hurried through the alleys and up the back ways to his home, with his face covered for shame so that no one would see him or know him.

While he was complaining to his wife about what had happened, the king's messenger came to take him to the banquet that Esther had made ready. Haman followed him to the banquet, but he was not happy. People are usually not happy when they have some of the pride taken out of them. As they sat at the banquet, the king asked Esther, "What is thy petition, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? for it shall be given thee even to the half of my kingdom." The king knew that it was some great thing that

she would ask or she would not have made this special preparation for it, and he was anxious to know what it was.

Then Esther, with her heart filled with sorrow, said, "If the king is pleased with me, this is my request, that the king will save my people and the life of all my people, for evil things have been spoken against us, which are not true, for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish."

As the king listened to his good queen telling this strange news, he was filled with anger and asked, "Who is it, and where is he that has dared to do these things?"

Esther answered, "Our enemy is the wicked Haman."

This made the king so angry that he arose from the table and went out into the garden to control himself. When he returned, he found Haman bowed at the feet of Esther begging for his life, for he feared the king. Then one of the king's officers said, "See that gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman has had built, on which to hang Mordecai, who saved the king's life?" This made the king still more angry and he said, "Hang him upon it." So they took Haman away and hanged him upon the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

That same day the king gave Esther the house of Haman with all his property. She also told the king that Mordecai was her cousin and had been very kind to her. Then the king took the ring he had given to Haman and gave it to Mordecai and appointed him to fill Haman's place.

Esther was still in trouble, for the decree which Haman had made ordering all the Jews to be killed on a certain day was sure to be carried out by the rulers and governors of Persia. Again she asked a favor of the king, but he told her that the decrees of the Medes and Persians could not be changed, not even by the kings who made them. But he told Esther and Mordecai that they might make any other decree they would like concerning the Jews, and set the king's seal to it. So Mordecai called the king's writers together and had them write another decree giving the Jews permission, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, to gather themselves together in every city, and to slay and destroy all who should try to harm them. This decree was copied in every language and sent to every province of the kingdom, by messengers on horseback, and by riders on mules, camels and young dromedaries.

Then the king gave Mordecai royal garments,

such as the king himself wore. They were blue and white, with a robe of purple and fine linen. Also the king set a crown of gold on his head. In these garments and chain of gold around his neck, Mordecai headed a great procession through the streets, and the Jews were filled with joy, and feasted because they were in favor with the king.

On the day appointed by Haman for the killing of the Jews, they took their swords and fought for their lives as Esther had ordered. It was a great battle all over the kingdom, but God gave the Jews the victory over all who came out against them.

On the fourteenth and fifteenth days they rested and rejoiced. They gave presents to one another and sent gifts to the poor because the Lord was good to them. In this way God saved Esther and her people from those who hoped to destroy them.

Then Esther sent letters to all the Jews telling them to keep the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the twelfth month every year, as a time of feasting and rejoicing because they had been saved.

Although Esther was the wife of the king, she was very young at this time, and saved her people because she loved them and had faith in God. This gave her the courage to do right.

After the death of the wicked Haman, Esther had great influence over her husband, the king. He became a better ruler and loved her more. This did not make Esther proud or selfish, but she always worked to do good for the people and to help the church as it then existed in the families of her people. Her whole life was spent in trying to make the people of Israel better and happier.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

THE Mary of whom we are to read here was the mother of Jesus. She lived in Nazareth, a small village in Galilee, seventy miles north of Jerusalem. The country around Nazareth was beautiful and Mary could look in any direction and see hills and mountains. There were lovely wild flowers, too, and no doubt the little girl would go with her playmates to the woods to gather great bunches of the fragrant blossoms, just as children do nowadays. There was also an abundance of fruit in Nazareth. The wild olive, fig, pomegranate, mulberry, lemon, almond, and quince were among the delicious varieties which grew there. Wouldn't you enjoy living in a town like that?

The little maid of Nazareth must have been a general favorite, for we learn from the Bible that she was gentle and loving and ready to give up her own way. It is a fine thing to be unselfish. Usually boys and girls will be good-natured on the playground so long as the games go as they like to have them; but when a game is suggested that they don't especially enjoy, the selfish ones are very apt to say, "I won't play!" I am sure

sweet-tempered Mary was not like that, but tried to please others.

One day while at prayer an angel came and said to her, "Hail, thou that art highly favored; the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among

AN ANGEL APPEARED TO MARY AND TOLD HER THAT SHE WAS TO BE THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR

women." This frightened Mary, and the angel said, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. Thou shalt have a son and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the son of the Highest, and the Lord God

shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary could not understand how this could be, but the angel said, "With God nothing is impossible."

Feeling unworthy of the great honor and hardly realizing what it all meant, she said to the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word."

The angel then disappeared, leaving Mary in deep thought and prayer, and filled with joy as she thought of what it all meant to her. She was to be the mother of Jesus, of whom the prophets had been preaching, and who should some day come as the Saviour of the world.

Filled with joy, she made preparations to go at once to tell her cousin Elisabeth, who lived among the hills of Judea a little south of Hebron. It was a journey of nearly ninety miles, but Mary was young, and the people thought nothing of walking long distances in those days.

Finally she came to the home of Elisabeth and was received with much joy. For three months she remained with Elisabeth who comforted her and strengthened her by her motherly kindness, for Elisabeth was quite old at that time. These

were happy days spent in the quiet country among the beautiful hills. They were full of joy in looking forward to the coming of Jesus.

Joseph and Mary were very poor. There were quite a number of children in the family, and the father was only a poor carpenter. In those days carpenters did not receive such good wages as they do now, and it was difficult, sometimes, to get even the necessities of life. But love in the home made the family happy. Jesus was a great comfort to Mary. His tenderness and loving sympathy did much to brighten her life.

Nazareth, though such a pretty village, was a very wicked place. The people used to say, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But in spite of the wickedness there, in Mary's home the children were brought up to love God, and live pure, clean lives. Mary was a faithful, devoted mother. She taught her children to be obedient, and to love the things of nature and the Word of God. As a little lad, Jesus learned his first lessons at her knee.

Jesus loved his mother dearly. They were the closest friends. And although Mary did not fully understand Jesus' mission here on earth, she was full of loving sympathy for him in everything.

While Jesus was still a boy, Joseph died, and Mary was left a widow. After that she turned

with even more devotion to her best loved child. You can imagine how in after years she must have suffered when Jesus was put to death upon the cruel cross.

As Jesus was dying, Mary stood near, weeping bitterly. As he looked upon her in pitying tenderness, his heart went out with a son's deep love to the dear mother who had always been so true to him. He could not leave her unprovided for. As he looked about, he saw John, his beloved disciple standing at the foot of the cross. Turning to his mother he said, "Behold thy son!" Then he said to John, "Behold thy mother!" And from that very hour John took her to his own home and cared for her tenderly. He was her protector always after that.

Just once do we hear of Mary after Jesus' death. That was when the disciples all gathered in the little upper room at Jerusalem to pray. Mary was one of the number. Is not that a beautiful thing to remember of Jesus' mother?

THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

JESUS was more than an ordinary man. He cured all kinds of diseases and brought the dead to life. The Bible speaks of three persons whom the Saviour raised from the dead: Lazarus, the son of the widow of Nain, and the daughter of Jairus.

Jairus was a rich man and one of the chief men of the town. He was a ruler in the Jewish church, or synagogue. So far as we know he had but this one child and he loved her dearly. She had a lovely home and all the pretty things she wanted to wear. She did not know what it was to work hard and get tired. The servants always did all the work. All she did was to play with her toys and be company for her father and mother. We often envy such girls, but they are usually not so happy as those who have to help do the work at home.

When Jairus' daughter was twelve years old, she became very sick. The best doctors were called but they could not help her, and her parents feared that she would die. As she grew weaker, their sorrow became very great. They

could not bear to think of giving up their only child. They had heard about Jesus, the good Teacher, and how he had raised the poor widow's son to life. So Jairus started out to find him. Perhaps Jesus would cure his daughter. He found Jesus surrounded by a crowd of people. He had just healed several people of their diseases and was now preaching to those who gathered around him.

Jairus came up, knelt at Jesus' feet and begged him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death. I pray thee come and lay thy hands on her that she may be healed, and she shall live."

Jesus and some of his disciples went with him. They were followed by many people. Among them was a woman who had been suffering with some incurable disease for twelve years. She pushed her way through the crowd until she came near to Jesus. Then she touched his garment, and instantly she was cured of the disease. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee well; go in peace." Jairus saw this and thought, "Surely he can cure my daughter." But as he was thinking what Jesus could do, a messenger came running up and said that his daughter had died and that it was of no use to trouble the Master any longer. At this the

father began to weep, for his heart was broken, but Jesus turned to him and said kindly, "Be not afraid, only believe, and she shall be made whole."

When they came to the ruler's house, the

JESUS TOOK JAIRUS' DAUGHTER BY THE HAND

people were weeping and making a great noise. Jesus said to them, "Why do you weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping." They would not believe him but laughed at what he had said, for they did not understand what he meant.

Then Jesus put them all out of the house and took three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the child, and went into the room where she lay dead. He took her by the hand and asked her to rise, and she rose up out of bed and walked.

Those who saw it were astonished and wondered, as Jesus asked her parents to give her some food.

The parents must have cried for joy when they saw their dear little girl alive again with the color of health in her cheeks. It must have made Jairus love Jesus, who was always so kind, and who went about doing good to all people.

THE STORY OF A FOREIGN WOMAN AND HER CHILD

"JESUS, the great Teacher and Healer, has come into our land."

The news ran quickly through all the region round about the cities of Tyre and Sidon. The great Preacher and Teacher from the country of the Jews had come. And what wonderful things he had done in Palestine! Perhaps he would perform some miracles here.

But it did not seem that this was going to be so. The Master and his little band of followers traveled on quietly. When they came to a village they would go quickly to the house where they wished to stop, and lodge there, in this way trying to keep the people from knowing where they were. Jesus was tired, and he wanted to rest and to think.

However, there was one mother in the region who was determined to see him. She had a little daughter who was ill with a very serious illness. The mother had tried in every way to help the child, but so far it had not been possible to cure her. The woman thought that perhaps Jesus would and could help her daughter in her illness.

"I *will* see Jesus," the mother insisted. "I *will* see him."

She went to the house where Jesus and his disciples were lodging. She insisted on going into the room where he was sitting. She fell down at his feet.

"Master, help my daughter who is sick," she begged. "I pray you, help my child. Cure her of her illness. I know you can, if you will."

Jesus looked at her kindly. He knew that he was going to help her, for he is always ready to help those who truly believe in him, and who ask for his aid. But first he wanted to show that she truly believed.

"Why should I help you, who are a stranger, when there are so many of my own people who need help?" he asked. "Why should I take the food which the children need, and give it to the dogs?" He used this word because often the Jews used it in connection with foreigners. Perhaps it did not seem kind, but Jesus meant the words kindly. His eyes and his voice must have been kinder than the words which he spoke.

The woman was quick. She saw what Jesus meant. She answered right away.

"Yes, Lord," she said. "But even the dogs under the table eat of the crumbs which the children let fall."

She knew that Jesus' goodness and kindness were so great that there was enough not only for the people of all the land of Palestine, but for all the people of the world besides.

Jesus was pleased with her answer.

"For this saying I will do as you ask," he told her. "Go back to your home now. You will find that your daughter has been cured."

As the woman looked into Jesus' kind face, she knew that his promise would be kept. She must have knelt once more to thank him. Then she hurried toward her home.

How her heart must have beat with joy as she went along the way! Her little daughter cured! She knew that the child was healed, for Jesus had said so. How happy they would be!

She could hardly wait to open her door. She hurried into the house, where her friends were waiting.

"How is the child? How is she?" she asked quickly. "Is she all right?"

"Yes," they answered her. "How did you know? She is sleeping peacefully. Come and see."

Into the bedroom the mother hurried. And there she found the little girl quietly resting on the bed. There was no more pain, no more fever. She was asleep, quite cured of her illness, as Jesus had promised.

Quietly and thankfully the mother watched. Soon the child awoke, as if she were waking from a pleasant nap.

"I am hungry, mother," she said. "Please give me something to eat. I feel so well, mother. All the pain is gone. How did it happen?"

"It was the great Doctor from Palestine, my daughter," answered the mother. "He has healed you by his great power, as he has healed others. He is the Lord and Master of all the world, my child. We must praise him and give him thanks for all the good that he has done for us. He loves us, as well as his own people."

"What can we do to thank him, mother?" the child asked.

"We can believe in him with all our hearts and minds and souls, my daughter. And we can tell others of him."

And so there was one family at least in the region of Tyre and Sidon where the members believed in Jesus the Son of God, who is the Lord of earth and heaven, with power over all; who is eager to help those who have faith in him, who trust him fully.

Most of Jesus' life was spent in Palestine, the little land about as big as our state of New Hampshire, far across the sea. This visit to Tyre and Sidon was the only time of which we

know that he ever left his homeland. Yet we who live nineteen hundred years later than Jesus lived know how far the good news of his power has spread. We know that the girls and boys of today are as dear to him as the girls and boys of his own land and time, and that he is as willing to help us as he was to help the little stranger girl of the long ago, whose mother went to him in faith that he could help her and heal her in her illness. He loves us, and in return we love him. "We love, because he first loved us," and gave his life for all the people of the world.

TWO SISTERS WHO LOVED JESUS

MARTHA and Mary lived in Bethany, a small town two miles from Jerusalem. We are told nothing about their father and mother, and it has been thought that they were both dead, for Martha and Mary were living with their brother Lazarus.

Martha was the elder sister, and was the housekeeper of the little family of three. She was tall, with dark brown eyes; she was full of energy. She was always busy keeping their little home neat and tidy, and making plans as to what ought to be done. She was not a selfish girl. She had a heart full of love and was always trying to help others. Mary was the younger one of the family, not so tall, and more graceful than her sister Martha. She had a sweet expression and was more given to thinking and reading.

Lazarus was a kind young man, trying to earn enough to keep his sisters comfortable. Some have thought that Lazarus was a scribe, or writer, who wrote copies of the law and other writings. Books were not printed in those days. The only books were those written by hand.

They were not poor, but well-to-do, and loved by everyone in the village.

Jesus made Bethany one of his resting places, and always stayed at the home of Martha and Mary. They were always happy when he came,

MARTHA COMPLAINED TO JESUS THAT MARY DID NOT HELP HER

for they loved him, and he talked kindly and cheerfully to them. They probably had a spare room and bed especially for his use where he could go and rest and sleep after being tired out from traveling about the country and teaching the people.

One day Jesus had come to their house, and Martha was preparing the evening meal. She was a little nervous about some things and was wishing that Mary would help her, but Mary was in the other room talking to Jesus.

Chairs were not very common in those days, and people often sat on the floor, so Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to his kind and helpful words.

Martha had been hurrying, anxious that everything should be just right, but found that she could not have the meal on time. Feeling tired and worried, she came in and complained to Jesus that her sister did not help her, and asked if he did not care, and if he would not excuse Mary. But Jesus looked into Martha's face and said, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful. Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." He meant that Mary had chosen to know more about the religion of God, which, when she came to die, would be the only thing she would need. This was the only thing death could not take from her, and it would give her a life of happiness forever in heaven.

This taught Martha a lesson, and it should teach us not to become so busy and so absorbed

in our work that we forget our Saviour. Jesus loved Martha and her brother Lazarus as much as he loved Mary. But he wanted Martha to trust more and not worry so much.

One day Lazarus became sick. They nursed him kindly and called the doctor, but he became weaker. They began to fear that their brother would die, and wished that Jesus were there. They were sure that Jesus could heal him as he had healed many another. Someone said that Jesus and his disciples were beyond the Jordan river. They sent word for him to come, for their brother was sick, but Jesus did not come at once. He waited until Lazarus was dead. He waited on purpose, for he knew that he could bring Lazarus back to life, and show the Jews, who did not believe in the resurrection, that there could be such a thing.

Two days after the messenger had come to Jesus with the message of Lazarus' sickness, Jesus said to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awaken him out of his sleep." The disciples did not understand his meaning and said, "Lord, if he sleep he will surely recover." Then Jesus told them plainly that Lazarus was dead, and that he was glad for their sake that he was not there, so that they might believe.

Many friends of Martha and Mary from Jerusalem had come to comfort them in their sorrow and to attend the funeral. Lazarus had been dead four days and had been put in the burial vault, when someone said that Jesus had come to town, and was on his way to their house. Martha at once hastened to meet him, and broke out in sobs, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother would not have died, but I know even now that whatever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee."

"Thy brother shall rise again," said Jesus.

"Yes, Lord, I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day," answered Martha.

Then Jesus looked at her in pity and said tenderly, "I who speak to thee am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Martha said that she believed, and the words strengthened and comforted her. She ran to tell her sister Mary that the Master had come.

As soon as Mary heard the news, she ran quickly to Jesus and said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Some of their friends had followed them and

they were weeping, also. Jesus looked at Mary and Martha and at their friends, and his eyes filled with tears and he wept with them.

Then some of the Jews said, "See how he loved Lazarus."

Now Jesus asked where they had laid Lazarus, and they took him to the sepulcher, or cave, which was the family burial place. The entrance was closed by a large stone and Jesus asked them to roll away the stone. When the stone had been taken away, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

We cannot imagine how astonished these Jews were and how Mary and Martha cried for joy when they saw their brother coming out of the tomb. They could hardly believe their eyes, until the Saviour again spoke to them. When they saw their brother again breathing freely and able to speak to them, they cried in joy, "This, our brother, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

When they returned to their house, everything seemed so changed. Lazarus was again with them and they were happy. They were also made glad because many of their friends, who would not believe Jesus was the Saviour, now believed on him. The news spread fast, and many people came to Bethany to see Lazarus and Jesus.

The love of Martha and Mary and Lazarus for one another and for Jesus shows us how all brothers and sisters should love one another and make a happy home guided by the love of Jesus.

Mary's unselfishness tells us to give something to the work of Jesus our Saviour.

HOW JESUS APPEARED FIRST TO A WOMAN AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

THE pleasant, flat-roofed house in the little town of Magdala, close to the shore of the Sea of Galilee, lay quiet in the warm afternoon sunshine. Then suddenly there was a terrible shriek. The mistress of the house wrung her hands in sorrow; the master walked up and down, up and down. What good were all their riches to them, when their beautiful daughter was enduring such suffering? How sad they were! All the doctors shook their heads when the father and the mother took the girl to them. She was beyond cure, they said. She had a terrible illness—an illness which even we who live today do not understand. We do know, however, that it was something terrible, for the Bible tells us that Mary of Magdala was "possessed of seven devils."

The days passed by. Mary's father and mother were rich; they spent their money freely on their daughter; they took her to doctor after doctor, but nothing could be done. When the attacks of illness seized her, she suffered very greatly,

and her parents suffered with her. As she grew up, the illness continued; she was never long free from pain. Her parents died, and she was left alone. She was rich, but oh, how ill and unhappy!

And then one day the report went through Palestine that a wonderful Physician had been heard of; he had cured the deaf and the dumb and the blind; he had healed lepers; he had even cast out devils!

Don't you think that Mary of Magdala must have listened breathlessly, when she heard this news? She listened to every word she could hear about the Great Physician, who was called "Jesus of Nazareth."

Then one day Mary heard that Jesus was in Capernaum, the city at the head of the lake, not far away. She made up her mind to go to him, and ask for help. She would take with her some treasure—a marble jar of precious ointment and some of her jewels, to give him in payment. Perhaps he could cure her. It was her last hope.

The little pleasure boat in which she used to sail on the lake was made ready, and quickly the servants helped their mistress into it. The wind was favorable, and northward they sailed, over the sparkling blue waves.

It was not long before they reached Capernaum.

"Where shall we find the Great Physician?" Mary's servants asked.

"He is eating dinner at the house of one of the Pharisees," was the answer. And soon the little party found the Great Teacher of Nazareth.

MARY ANOINTED JESUS' HEAD WITH THE OIL

How kind he looked as he sat there in the midst of the group at the table! Mary's heart beat high with hope the minute she saw him.

But as she looked at him, she knew that he

would not want to be paid for helping her! She suddenly felt in her heart a great devotion and a great love.

She went quietly forward with tears in her eyes. As was the custom in those days, the feet of Jesus were bare. Mary poured upon them some of the precious ointment from her jar. She wiped them with her hair. She kissed them. Jesus looked kindly at her. Then he spoke to the Pharisee in a tone of rebuke.

"When I came into the house," he said, "you were not even polite to me. You did not give me water to wash my feet, which were dusty from the road; you did not kiss me in greeting; you did not give me oil to put on my head, as the custom is. But this woman has done all these things, and more. In her lifetime she has done many wrong things, but this good act has made up for all. Because she has loved much, she shall receive help from me."

As Jesus spoke, Mary was watching him eagerly. She *knew* that he could help her!

And he did. He turned to her, looking at her lovingly.

"You are forgiven for any wrong things that you have done," he said. "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

And Mary left the room cured. The seven

demons had gone from her. She was well and strong!

Don't you think that she must have felt grateful to Jesus, and have loved him dearly for what he had done for her? Of course she did!

But that is just the beginning of the story of Mary of Magdala and the great things that happened to her. After that she left her home. She joined with the other women who followed Jesus, and she became one of his most devoted followers.

Because she was wealthy, she could help in many ways. She was one of the women who, the Bible tells us, "ministered to him of her substance." She went with Jesus and his disciples through the land, helping in every way that she could help.

But though Jesus was doing so much good in Palestine, there were many people who hated him, and at last, as you know, he was led away to the cross to die.

Among those who stood near-by and watched as Jesus hung there was Mary of Magdala. Her heart was almost broken as she watched his suffering, but even then she had a faint hope. Jesus had done so much for her. She knew that he had raised others from the dead; he had saved others; would he not be able to save himself?

But her Master died there upon the cross. He was buried in a tomb in a garden, and a great stone was placed in front of the entrance. Mary Magdalene went back to Jerusalem with the other women, to grieve and to pray.

As it began to dawn on the next morning, they set out to the tomb of Jesus. As they walked along they wondered how they could roll away the great stone from the entrance of the tomb.

But when they reached the place, a wonderful thing had happened. An angel of the Lord had rolled away the stone, and sat upon it!

He spoke to them kindly, and told them not to be afraid; Jesus, who had been crucified, was no longer dead and buried in the tomb. He had risen from the dead!

The women hurried back toward the city. They told the disciples, Peter and John, what they had seen and heard. The men hurried back to the tomb, with Mary following. The words of the angel were true! The body of Jesus was gone! He had risen, as he said.

Peter and John left the garden, and went back to Jerusalem, to carry the news to the other disciples. But Mary remained at the tomb, weeping. She hardly knew why she cried; she did not understand what had happened.

As she stood there, she looked once more into

the tomb. And there, inside, were two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

They spoke to her.

"Why do you weep?" they asked.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she answered, "and I know not where they have laid him." She had not understood what the angel had told the women first; her mind was troubled.

But as she spoke, she heard a sound behind her. She turned and looked. She thought that it was perhaps the man in charge of the garden, for she could not see clearly through her tears.

"Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" she heard a voice asking.

"Sir, if thou hast carried away the body of my Master, pray tell me," she answered.

Then she heard one word, in a familiar tone, "Mary!"

How well she knew that voice! It was the voice of Jesus! Quickly she turned. "Master!" she said breathlessly. "Master!"

So it was that Jesus appeared first of all to Mary Magdalene, after his resurrection from the dead. And don't you think that as long as she lived after that, she must have been even more sure than she was before that the One who

had done so much for her, who had risen from the dead and appeared to her, was not only her Saviour, but the Saviour of all the people of the world? And don't you think that after that she must have told many people about him, and tried to do her share in giving the good news of the gospel to everyone in all the world?

A GOOD WOMAN RESTORED TO LIFE

NOT very far from the old, old city of Jerusalem, there is a seacoast city nowadays called Jaffa, but known in the long-ago times of the Bible as Joppa. It was a very busy city in the days when Jesus was alive, for Jerusalem is not on the sea, and Joppa is the nearest port. Nineteen hundred years ago it was far busier than it is today. Ships from all parts of the world sailed in and out of its harbor, and it hummed with activity.

Joppa is so near to Jerusalem that the story of Jesus was told there very shortly after his death. In fact, many of the disciples of Jesus, who were persecuted in Jerusalem, took refuge in Joppa. Soon there was a group of Christians in the city, trying to obey the Master's commands, and to live as he wanted them to live.

One of the best of all the Christian women in Joppa was named Tabitha. As a girl, Tabitha had been very beautiful. Her own Hebrew name, "Tabitha," means "beauty," but in addition to that she had been given another name by her Greek neighbors—"Dorcas," which means "gazelle," perhaps because she was bright-eyed and graceful.

But there was something about Dorcas that was more beautiful than her eyes and her features. She was beautiful in heart and soul as well as in body. When she became a Christian, she devoted herself to all sorts of good works and to charity. She spent her life in going among the poor, and in making garments for those who needed them.

One day Dorcas became ill—so ill that she died.

In their trouble the Christians of Joppa thought of the Apostle Peter, who was not far away from the city at a place called Lydda. Two men were sent to him, to ask him to come with them to Joppa just as soon as possible. And Peter was glad to go with the men; he was always ready to help those who were in any kind of trouble.

Quickly the party hurried along the road from Lydda to Joppa—one mile, two miles, three miles—ten! As they walked along, they talked of the good deeds that Dorcas had done—how she had helped the widows and the poor orphans; how she had nursed the sick; how she had spent her life in doing kind acts for others. Peter must have thought how much this good woman had meant to the people among whom she lived. He must have wondered what he could do. He must have asked God for power to help.

At last they came to Joppa and to the street where Dorcas lived. Into the house they went, and on, up the stairs, into the upper room, where her body lay. As Peter came into the room, her sorrowful friends held up before his eyes the garments upon which she had sewed. Their faces, sad with weeping, showed how much they were grieving for her who had done so much for them.

Peter must have remembered the time when Jesus, his Master, had raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, for he acted very much as Jesus had done at that time. He sent everyone out of the room; he knelt down and prayed to God that Dorcas might be restored to life. Then he turned to her and spoke, using her Hebrew name, "Tabitha, arise!"

And God heard Peter's prayer and answered it. Dorcas, who had been dead, opened her eyes; she sat up! She was alive once more, well and strong and ready to go to work again for the poor and the needy!

Peter held out his hand to her, and she rose to her feet. Then he called to those outside.

"Come hither! Come in!" he said. "Dorcas, who was dead, is alive again. God has restored her to us, so that she may go on with the good works that she has been doing. God's goodness

and glory are shown once more, in that He has given Dorcas back to us!"

In the days that followed, Dorcas devoted herself even more and more to good works and to charity. God had been so good to her that she wanted to do something for him in return. She knew that the way to do this was to do good to others, for had not Jesus taught his followers that when we do anything for others in his name it is just as if we did it for him? So she sewed and worked in other ways, happily and thankfully, as the days went by.

And the good that Dorcas did was so great that even today, nineteen hundred years afterward, there are groups of women in the world who call themselves by the name "Dorcas Societies," because they work for the poor as did Dorcas, in those long-ago days when the Church of Jesus was just beginning. She did her duty as she saw it without thought of fame, and greater fame among men and greater reward from God have come to her than to many of those who in her lifetime would have looked down upon her with scorn, as only a poor follower of Christ, who was spending her life for others.

Truly the words of the Bible have been proved in the case of Dorcas, "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

LYDIA, THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CONVERT IN EUROPE

"THAT girl is as good at business as a man." The words were spoken admiringly, even though grudgingly. "She knows as much about the making and the sale of purple dyes as anyone in the city. Just watch her now! She is always fair and just in her dealings, but no one need try to take advantage of her!"

As the man spoke, he was looking at a young Jewish girl who was walking through the dye market of the city of Thyatira, in Asia Minor. It was in the days of long ago, very soon after Jesus was born, and when few people outside of Palestine had heard of the Saviour. However, there were many Jews scattered everywhere, on account of business and trade, and they carried with them, wherever they went, their belief in the one true God. The young girl of whom the man had been talking belonged to one of the Jewish families of the city.

At that time, in the first century A.D., Thyatira was a busy place. Its chief business was the trade in dyes, particularly purple dyes, which were used in coloring the robes and gar-

ments of the kings and rich men of the day. This dye was obtained from a little shellfish which was found along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Sometimes the shellfish were called "purples," on account of the color of the liquid which they yielded, and which was used to make the dye.

Lydia, which was the name of the girl who knew so much about dyes, grew to be a clever and capable woman. She was always interested in business, and as she grew older she carried on a business of her own. Her fame as a dealer in dyes spread, and she became very wealthy. As the years passed, she left her home in Asia Minor, and went to live in Europe, in the city of Philippi, in Macedonia.

Philippi was at that time a very important place, and a center of trade. It is about twelve miles from the sea, on the River Gangites. There Lydia established herself in a house of her own. Her business prospered, and she had to hire people to help her. She was a success.

But in all Lydia's life as a business woman she did not forget her religion. She was a Jewess, a believer in the true God, but not, of course, a follower of Jesus Christ, for she had never been told about him. When she went to live in Philippi, she found that there was no Jewish

synagogue in the city. The Jews gathered on the Sabbath Day at a place of prayer by the riverside. There they worshiped as best they could.

One day as Lydia and her friends were praying at this place, a group of strange men drew near. They talked to the women who had gathered to worship, and told them the wonderful story of Jesus, the Saviour, and what he had done for the world. The leader of these men was Paul, the apostle, and as he spoke, the Lord opened Lydia's heart to the things which he said, and she believed his words at once. So it came about that a business woman was the very first convert to Christianity, in Europe!

Paul saw that Lydia truly believed in Jesus, and he baptized her then and there. Immediately she showed what kind of woman she was, for she invited the apostle and his friends, Silas and Luke, to come to her house to stay while they were in Philippi.

"I have plenty of room. I have servants who can take care of you," she urged them. "God commands us to show hospitality to strangers. I pray you, come home with me."

So urgent was her invitation, that Paul and his friends went to her home as she asked. And they were entertained so hospitably and so kindly

that they made Lydia's house their home while they were in Philippi. They knew that they were always welcome there because the owner showed the true Christian spirit of kindness to strangers.

But one day a dreadful thing happened to Paul and his friend Silas. Because they tried to help a poor slave girl, they were arrested and put into prison. There they were beaten and badly treated.

How anxious Lydia and her family must have been that night! And how happy they were the next morning to hear that their friends had been declared innocent and released through a miracle of God! They were waiting to receive the apostles when they got back to the house, ready to bathe the wounds made by the beatings, and to comfort them as best they could.

But Paul and Silas had been asked to leave the city of Philippi, and so they said good-by to their kind hostess and went on their way. Later Paul went back to Philippi a second time, and we are sure that he must have again visited at the home of Lydia, the business woman who had shown herself such a kind hostess.

Perhaps it seems strange to you to think of a business woman in the days of long ago. Perhaps you have thought that a girl in business

was unheard of in Bible times. But even in those days, you see, there were business women as well as business men, and they showed their religion in their business on week days, as well as in their churchgoing on Sundays.

Some day you may go into some sort of business. Will you try to be a Christian business woman as Lydia of Thyatira was? You will find that it pays.

THE SLAVE GIRL WHO MOCKED THE APOSTLES

PHILIPPI in Macedonia, where Lydia lived, was a beautiful city.

At the time when the apostle Paul was in Philippi, there was a slave girl in the city. She did not have a home, for her parents had sold her to some persons who used her to tell fortunes.

People were very superstitious in those days and believed in fortune telling more than they do now, though even today there are many who believe in luck. This girl acted very strangely and often prophesied things which came true, and so the people believed that she could tell fortunes. The people who bought her charged a certain price for telling anybody's fortune. In this way she made money for her masters.

It must have been a hard, cruel life for this poor girl to be taken from town to town to tell fortunes. Perhaps her mind was not right and the people thought that this was a sign of being a good fortune teller. Her masters probably abused her many times and treated her like a poor slave.

Let us see what happened to this poor girl.

Paul and Silas had come to Philippi to tell the people about Jesus. Every day they went

about the streets of Philippi preaching to the people. Soon they noticed that they were followed by this little slave girl, who cried, "These are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." She mocked them in this way for many days. At first Paul paid no attention to her, but her actions troubled him, and one day he turned and looked sharply at her, and said to the evil spirit in her, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her," and the spirit came out that same hour.

She was now cured and did not talk foolishly, and when her masters saw that she could no longer earn money for them by repeating what the evil spirit said, they were angry and caught Paul and Silas and brought them before the rulers of the city, saying, "These men, who are Jews, do greatly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe."

The owners of the girl did not tell the rulers about the healing of the girl, for that was not unlawful. But they accused the preachers of disturbing the city and introducing new customs which were contrary to Roman customs.

This all happened near the market place where the people were in the habit of meeting to buy and sell. A mob soon rose up against Paul and

Silas and made such a tumult that the rulers of the city ordered them beaten with many stripes and put in prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely.

Bruised and bleeding from the public whipping, the jailor put them in the inner prison, which was a dark, foul dungeon, and placed their feet in the stocks, that they might not escape.

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang, and the other prisoners heard them. Then there was an earthquake which shook the prison, and all the doors opened and the chains fell from the prisoners. The keeper of the prison awoke out of his sleep and saw the prison doors all open and thought the prisoners had all escaped. Fearing he would be put to death for allowing them to escape, he was about to kill himself with his own sword, when Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

The jailor took a light and came trembling into the cell where Paul and Silas were, and, kneeling at their feet, cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and they answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." They then told the jailor and all who were with him about the Saviour, and they believed and were all baptized.

The jailor then took Paul and Silas and washed

their wounds that had been made when they were beaten and made them as comfortable as possible by giving them food and drink.

In the morning the rulers sent officers to the prison asking the jailor to let those prisoners go. When the jailor told Paul he answered, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, although we are Romans, and have cast us into prison. Now, will they discharge us privately? No, let them come themselves and let us out."

Paul was a free-born Roman, and they had no right to imprison him, or beat him without a fair trial, so Paul spoke boldly.

When the rulers heard Paul's words and that he was a Roman, they were afraid lest they might be punished for what they had done to him, and they came and begged earnestly that they leave the city. Paul and Silas left the prison and came to the house of Lydia. Here they met the disciples and talked with them and bade them good-by and went on their journey.

As to the poor slave girl, we do not know what became of her. After the evil spirit was taken out of her, she did not tell fortunes and was of no use to her masters. Lydia may have taken an interest in her and helped her. As God was able to take the evil spirit out of this poor girl, so is he able to take the badness out of us all.

PRISCILLA, WHO HELPED TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL IN GREECE

THE Jewish quarter of the city of Rome was humming with news.

"Claudius says that all the Jews must leave the city! The emperor has made a decree commanding us to depart!"

Aquila, the Jewish tent maker, and his wife Priscilla, were very much disturbed. Priscilla must have thought that they were always moving! How long ago it seemed since she had been a little girl in Pontus, far away from Rome, on the shores of the Black Sea. There had not been many Jews in Pontus, and she had seemed so odd to her neighbors that they had given to her the name "Priscilla"—the little old woman! The lad who now was her husband had been called "Aquila," the Roman word for "eagle," possibly because of his sharp black eyes, which seemed to see everything that was going on.

From Pontus, Aquila and Priscilla had come to Rome. And now they must travel farther! How hard it would be for them to leave their home, and the business which they had built up! Priscilla worked at the trade just as steadily as

Aquila did, and what hard work it was! They made tents, which were used by soldiers going out to fight in foreign lands, or by travelers who went on long journeys on horseback or on camelback.

Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! One strip of goat's hair cloth after another had to be fastened together. Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! There were no sewing machines in those days, and all the work had to be done by hand. Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! There was plenty of time to think and to talk as they worked. And how they talked of all sorts of things—particularly of religion, for they were religious folk. And with all their hard work, Priscilla and Aquila had been able to save a bit of money, and were planning for the future happily, when the emperor sent out the command:

"All the Jews must leave the city of Rome!"

Of course the emperor had to be obeyed! The Jews of the great old city packed up their belongings; soon they were ready to depart.

To Priscilla and Aquila it seemed wise to go from Rome to the Greek city of Corinth. There, they thought, they might find the trade good, for Corinth was one of the greatest trading centers of the ancient world. True, it was a wicked city, but they need not mix with their heathen neighbors. And there was a Jewish synagogue in the city where they might worship with those of their own belief.

So it came about that Aquila and Priscilla settled in Corinth, that great, wicked city of olden times.

A little later, when the Apostle Paul went to Corinth to teach and to preach, he wanted to find a place to live. Paul, you know, had learned the trade of tent making when he was a boy, and even while he was teaching and preaching about Jesus, he earned his living by making tents; he received no money for his work as a missionary. So it was natural for him to ask, just as soon as he reached Corinth, "Are there any tent makers here?"

"To be sure," they told him. "There are the tent makers, Aquila and Priscilla."

Paul went immediately to their house. He found that they would let him live with them and work with them, and soon there were three tent makers working, instead of two, stitching away, and talking together of all sorts of things.

You can easily guess what subject Paul liked to talk about best! He would tell over and over the story of Jesus, the Saviour of the world. He would tell Aquila and Priscilla about the risen Lord. And so well did he talk, that soon they came to believe in Jesus with all their hearts and minds.

On the Sabbath Day, they would all three go

to the synagogue, the Jewish church. Paul and Aquila would talk to the men about Jesus; Priscilla would talk to the women at every opportunity she had.

Paul preached in Corinth for a year and a half. Then he went to Ephesus, another city of Greece, to give the message of the gospel to the people there. Aquila and Priscilla went with him, and they all continued with the good work that they were doing together.

At first there were very few Christians in Ephesus, and they held their meetings in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. There Paul preached, and Aquila and Priscilla helped him.

But the preaching of Paul and his helpers made the heathen people of Ephesus angry. There was a riot. At first the leaders refused to have anything to do with the matter, but the people became more and more angry.

"To the wild beasts with the Christian!" they cried. "To the wild beasts with him!"

And so it came about that there in Ephesus Paul was put into the arena, to fight with wild beasts, as was the custom sometimes in those days. And Priscilla and Aquila were probably sentenced to the same fate.

We do not know exactly what happened there in Ephesus, but Aquila and Priscilla offered to

lay down their own necks for Paul's life. In some way they saved both him and themselves from death, and Paul was always grateful to them for what they did. He considered them among his truest friends.

In spite of threats and danger, Priscilla and Aquila went on with their work. When Paul left Ephesus and went on to another city, they stayed behind, and continued to preach and to teach. They won the hearts of many men and women to Jesus, particularly a great preacher named Apollos.

Priscilla, like Lydia, was a Christian business woman of the olden time. She carried on her business rightly; she taught and served and managed her household; she is an example for all time of the way in which we can do our work well in many lines, for our church, and for our homes, and for our business.

Once upon a time Jesus said to his followers, "These things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Priscilla did many things well, but what she did for Jesus, and for Paul, in the name of Jesus, was the greatest thing that she did—the thing for which she will always be remembered.

Princeton Theological Seminary Library
1 1012 01643 4278